



**Director of
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CENTRAL AMERICA: Renewed Peace Initiative

The meetings that began yesterday between the "Contadora" Foreign Ministers and Central American leaders apparently are intended to promote a new dialogue aimed at avoiding a broad regional conflict. []

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The Contadora group—Panama, Mexico, Venezuela, and Colombia—plans to hold discussions with government officials in Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras, and Costa Rica. US Embassy sources in the region indicate the Contadora ministers will urge El Salvador and Honduras to hold bilateral meetings with Nicaragua. []

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Such discussions would be designed to pave the way for a regional conference. They also would be intended to reduce tensions arising from Honduran support of anti-Sandinista guerrillas in Nicaragua and Sandinista sponsorship of the leftist insurgency in El Salvador. []

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Salvadoran Foreign Minister Chavez Mena has informed US officials that his government remains opposed to bilateral meetings. He also implied that most of his counterparts in Central America share this view and will continue to push for a regional meeting. []

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Comment: The Contadora countries appear increasingly concerned about the volatility of the Salvadoran and Nicaraguan conflicts and their potential for spreading. By advocating both bilateral and multinational meetings, they may hope to offer a compromise acceptable to Nicaragua—which repeatedly has indicated that it favors bilateral discussions—and the other Central American states. []

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The apparent compromise solution probably reflects Mexico's strong influence. Mexico fears that a regional conference would give the Central American nations a forum to mount a diplomatic offensive against Nicaragua and, indirectly, against Mexico's support for the Sandinista regime. []

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The Central American nations, however, are likely to be concerned that preliminary bilateral meetings would be a victory for Nicaragua. This might remove any incentive for later regional discussions. []

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CHINA-EASTERN EUROPE: Expanding Relations

China is expanding its ties with Eastern Europe to demonstrate its more independent foreign policy and to improve its commercial position there. [redacted]

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The US Embassy in Beijing reports that party leader Hu Yaobang is to visit Romania and Yugoslavia next month. Deputy Foreign Minister Qian Qichen will tour six East European countries in June.

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The Chinese have signed agreements with Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and East Germany calling for substantially increased trade this year and have extended loans to Poland and Yugoslavia.

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Comment: Hu is likely to encourage Yugoslavia and Romania to maintain their independent policies. Qian will be exploring the attitudes of those states more closely aligned with the USSR. [redacted]

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Beijing's offer of economic inducements probably is aimed in part at deterring increased East European political and economic dependence on the USSR. China also is interested in expanding trade for commercial reasons. Over the past two years economic relations with Eastern Europe have suffered from cutbacks in trade resulting from readjustments in China's domestic economy. [redacted]

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The recent improvement in Sino-Soviet relations apparently has led Moscow to encourage its allies to be receptive to Beijing's overtures in the hope of drawing China away from the West. The Soviets will monitor developments closely, however, and try to prevent any major increase in Chinese influence. [redacted]

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PAKISTAN: More Riots in Karachi

Troops in Karachi were called in yesterday to quell renewed religious disturbances when a mob burned several Shia mosques, stores, and residences in a section of the city. The latest violence reportedly resulted from the stabbing on Monday of two Sunni youths, allegedly by Shias. The authorities have not reimposed a curfew, but they have made arrests, used tear gas, and closed area roads.

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Comment: An increase in the religious violence would again test President Zia's ability to maintain order in Pakistan's largest city. By not reimposing the curfew, the authorities evidently hope to forestall criticism by political opponents.

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NICARAGUA: Opposition Protest

The Democratic Coordinating Board, an umbrella organization uniting most of the opposition, has joined the Conservative Party in temporarily withdrawing from the Council of State. The move stems from official harassment of a Conservative Party delegate who raised procedural objections during the Council's discussions of a resolution denouncing US support for anti-Sandinista insurgents. The Board's decision comes at a time when it is reassessing its previous policy of cooperation with the Sandinistas and choosing more aggressive leaders.

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Comment: Activists on the Board have been threatening to withdraw from the Council for the past several months because of dissatisfaction with the junta's proposed law governing political parties. Meanwhile, the Sandinistas are increasing criticism of the opposition parties for failing to condemn the anti-Sandinista insurgents. The junta may label members of the Democratic opposition as traitors and use more harassment tactics if they do not rejoin the Council.

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WEST GERMANY-US: Host Nation Support Funding

Bonn is concerned that Washington's failure to provide its share of funds this year, under an agreement made in early 1982, for a logistic program to support US forces in wartime will raise doubts about US reliability. The West Germans have agreed to mobilize 93,000 reservists for the wartime support of US reinforcements. They have to start spending their own funds earmarked for this year by 31 May. A senior Defense Ministry official says this funding may be lost soon unless the US appropriates funds to cover its share. [REDACTED]

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The government regards the host nation support agreement as important evidence of the US commitment to help defend West Germany. Defense Ministry officials, however, fear their government may not authorize host nation support funding for 1984 without an indication of willingness by the US to provide its share. Budget submissions are due by 31 August. [REDACTED]

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POLAND: Solidarity Meeting

Former Solidarity chief Walesa probably publicized his meeting over the weekend with members of Solidarity's underground temporary coordinating committee to strengthen his credibility and to avoid any government charges of conspiracy. A communique released by a spokesman for Walesa stated that the meeting, Walesa's first since his release from internment last November, had adopted a "common position" on the situation in the country. A government legal official said Walesa could be arrested for his participation in the meeting. [REDACTED]

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Comment: The meeting probably was shorter than indicated in the communique because of tight police surveillance. It may actually have taken place before Easter while Walesa was visiting southern Poland. Walesa is likely to have urged his underground colleagues to limit the protests scheduled for early May so as not to jeopardize the papal visit in June. He may believe that the authorities will hesitate to move against him before the visit, which the regime hopes will lend it legitimacy and lead to easing of Western sanctions. [REDACTED]

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INTERNATIONAL: Socialist International's Congress

Members of the Socialist International, at their biennial congress last weekend, reelected Willy Brandt of West Germany as president and chose Pentti Vaananen of Finland for the administrative post of general secretary. Resolutions on disarmament, the Middle East, and southern Africa contained little that conflicted with US policy. Resolutions on Latin America and the Caribbean, however, claimed that US policies have aggravated problems in those areas. The International reiterated support for the Nicaraguan revolution, expressed the hope that Nicaragua would follow an independent course, and called for an end to US "military intervention" there.

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Comment: The tributes to slain PLO official Sartawi reduced the time available for discussing and amending original resolutions. The resolutions written by West European parties were generally moderate and were balanced by expressions of solidarity toward democratic forces in Afghanistan and Poland. The Latin American resolutions, however, reflected the more extreme viewpoints of their drafters—the member parties from that region.

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UN: Nuclear Energy Conference Postponed

The Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy Conference that had been scheduled for August is likely to be postponed until after the Nonproliferation Treaty Review Conference in 1985. The Preparatory Committee has been unable to agree on language on nonproliferation, on agenda items, or on procedures acceptable to both the developed and the developing countries. It then recommended the postponement. The major obstacle is the refusal by India and Argentina to accept language that would ban the use of transferred technology for the development of peaceful nuclear explosions.

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Comment:

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The General Assembly probably will call for another preparatory meeting in 1984, and the preparations for the conference are likely to take until late 1985.

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LIBERIA: Commitment to Civilian Rule

Head of State Doe, in a speech yesterday marking the military government's third anniversary, reaffirmed his pledge to restore Liberia to civilian rule by 1985. He pledged full support for the draft constitution that recently was submitted for review by the military council and a civilian constituent assembly. Doe also promised to complete a census by next February to help draw up future electoral constituencies. [REDACTED]

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Comment: Doe seems genuinely committed to surrendering power, but political or economic unrest could force postponement or cancellation of elections. Doe faces near constant coup plotting from enlisted men eager for the perquisites of power, and some of his colleagues are ambivalent about returning to the barracks. Moreover, Liberia's stagnant economy—now underwritten by nearly \$100 million in US aid—could produce widespread protests. These threats could prompt Doe to decide to remain in power. [REDACTED]

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MALI-USSR: Frictions in Relations

An adviser to President Traore has told the US Embassy that the President's trip to Moscow, originally set for last summer and rescheduled for mid-April, has been postponed because Traore is "tired." No new date for the visit was reported. The two countries have long had an economic and military aid relationship, and the Soviets have formally described Mali as a "progressive" state. [redacted]

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Comment: Traore may be stalling on the visit to avoid jeopardizing his attempt to obtain more Western aid. The Soviets apparently are concerned that his turn to the West to restructure Mali's lagging economy will reduce their influence. Moscow also may be worried about growing involvement by Western companies in Mali's mining industry. [redacted]

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PLO-SWEDEN: Arafat's Trip

PLO chief Arafat believes his arrival in Stockholm yesterday for a one-day visit as the guest of the Socialist Brotherhood Movement—a branch of the ruling Social Democratic Party—will improve his and the PLO's international stature. Prime Minister Palme, in his capacity as SDP chairman, will meet with Arafat today. Senior Norwegian, Finnish, and Danish Social Democrats traveled to Stockholm to attend a dinner for the PLO chief yesterday. Although the visit by Arafat has been billed strictly as an SDP affair, Arafat was met at the airport by a Foreign Ministry official. [redacted]

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Comment: The SDP's invitation has been a source of domestic controversy and probably reflects Palme's ambition to influence events outside Sweden. Palme evidently hoped the visit would strengthen the PLO leader's moderate approach in the now-stalled Middle East peace effort and Arafat's own position in PLO circles. [redacted]

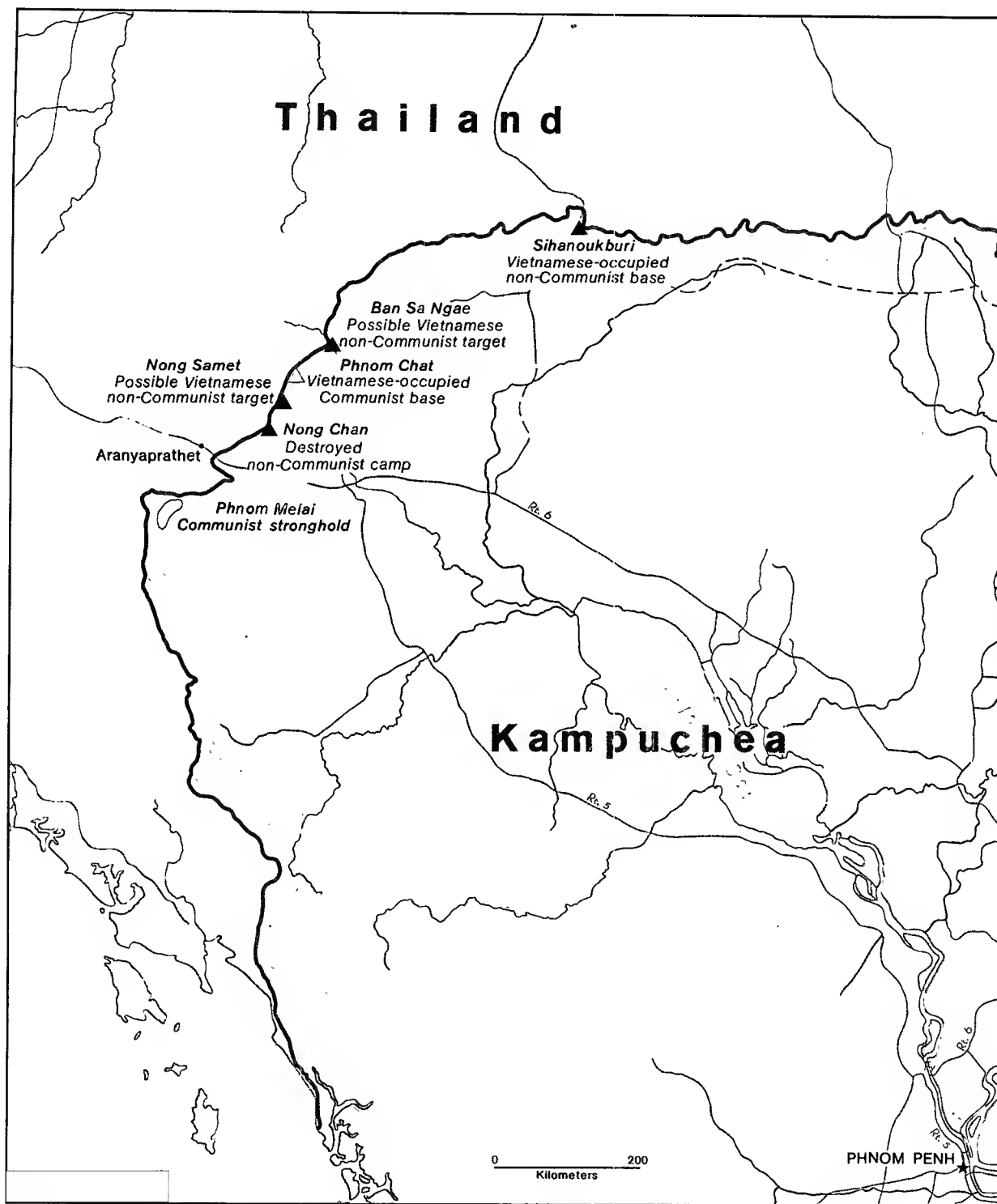
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Special Analysis

VIETNAM-KAMPUCHEA: Effects of Recent Fighting

Vietnam's attacks against major guerrilla bases along the Thai-Kampuchean border have demonstrated the military weakness of the resistance and its inability to control territory. Although Communist resistance forces can still conduct small-scale guerrilla operations, the non-Communists will have to spend much of the coming rainy season establishing new base camps. Thailand, meanwhile, is taking steps to coordinate ASEAN protests against the Vietnamese assaults.

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Each of the three Kampuchean resistance factions has lost at least one base this year. In February the non-Communist resistance and refugee camp at Nong Chan, controlled by nearly 3,000 troops of the Khmer People's National Liberation Front, was captured and destroyed.

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Early this month the Communist Democratic Kampuchea base at Phnom Chat, which was defended by approximately 2,500 troops, was captured. Sihanoukuri, Prince Sihanouk's largest resistance base, with an estimated 2,000 armed troops, also fell early this month.

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As many as 80,000 Kampuchean civilian refugees have been displaced by the raids. Most of them have fled to Thailand.

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The Vietnamese attacks led to shallow penetrations of Thai territory at the height of the fighting early this month. These resulted in skirmishes with Thai Army units.

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Vietnam's Dry Season Gains

Hanoi's dry season campaign has weakened and demoralized the resistance and restricted its areas of operations. The resistance will be forced to spend much of the rainy season—which begins next month—reorganizing and relocating to new camps rather than harassing Vietnamese troops. The attacks also have undermined the political credibility of the resistance by underlining Vietnam's military dominance in Kampuchea.

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Political Reactions

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Outside support for the ASEAN effort has been mixed, with Japan and New Zealand voicing the strongest criticism of Vietnam. Japanese Foreign Minister Abe assured a group of ASEAN journalists that Tokyo will not resume economic aid to Vietnam unless it pulls its troops out of Kampuchea. Abe also said that Japan will continue providing humanitarian aid to refugees along the border, and Japan's Ambassador to Thailand said he will soon visit the border area as an additional demonstration of support for ASEAN. []

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New Zealand has condemned the incursions and supported the call by ASEAN for the Vietnamese to end their attacks. Wellington also said it will continue to support ASEAN's efforts to find a negotiated settlement. []

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Australia's new government still is sorting out its policies on Southeast Asia and thus far has focused its attention on the plight of Kampuchean refugees displaced by the fighting. It also has noted that, if the Democratic Kampuchea guerrilla force were removed, Hanoi would have no further excuse for maintaining a military presence in Kampuchea. []

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China has used the Vietnamese attacks to criticize the USSR's support of Vietnam and to discredit Hanoi's professed interest in achieving a political settlement in Kampuchea. Following a Vietnamese attack against a resistance base in January, the visiting Chinese Army chief of staff publicly told the Thai that China would not stand idly by if Vietnam invaded Thailand. []

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The Chinese, [] also have hinted they might increase tension on the Sino-Vietnamese border. According to press reports last week, China's Foreign Ministry has delivered a note to Vietnam's Embassy in Beijing accusing Hanoi of stepping up clashes along the Sino-Vietnamese border and warning of grave consequences if such provocations continue. []

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Future Military Moves

Two major non-Communist resistance and refugee camps—Nong Samet and Ban Sa Ngae—could be attacked with little warning before the rains begin. At least 6,000 Vietnamese troops supported by artillery and armor are in the general vicinity of the camps. The political objectives of any additional attacks would be to reduce further the credibility of the resistance forces and to discourage ASEAN political and military support.

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The loss of Phnom Chat will not substantially reduce Democratic Kampuchea's ability to conduct small-scale operations during the rainy season. The Communist group has at least 25,000 seasoned guerrillas, most of whom are located south of Aranyaprathet and along the northern Kampuchean border. These forces have not been heavily involved in the dry season fighting.

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